

Good Afternoon members of the Committee.

Thank you for allowing me to testify before you today on
Bill Number 5372: An Act Concerning Accessible Housing.

My name is Deborah Bassett and I am currently a Graduate student at the UCONN School of Social Work. I am here today advocating for housing that is accessible to people with disabilities.

There are three features that will make homes more accessible or visitable to everyone and these include: one zero step entrance, all interior doors providing at least 32 inches of unobstructed passage space, and at least a half bathroom on the main floor.

These features make homes easier for people who develop a mobility impairment to visit friends and extended family rather than having to turn down invitations, or not be invited at all. These features also provide a basic shell of access to permit formerly non-disabled people to remain in their homes if they develop a disability, rather than forcing them to do expensive renovations, relocate to a different house, live in an inaccessible home which endangers their health and safety, or move from the community into a nursing home.

In addition, these three features make fiscal sense for society as a whole. For instance, the average cost for one year of nursing home care exceeds \$50,000 per person, 62% of which is paid with public dollars. Sale and re-sale of these homes is enhanced in an era where the senior demographic is growing rapidly and baby boomers are attracted to homes that welcome their aging parents and provide easy-use homes for themselves. These features cost little up front, unlike the higher after-the-fact cost of renovation for widening doors and adding ramps.

I am fully in favor of incentives that will entice builders to put in more accessible features in 25 percent of the homes they build in the future as this will certainly help the lack of minimally accessible housing that exists today.

I am grateful to Representative Green for showing his support and for bringing this much needed proposal to the Housing Committee for their endorsement as a first step towards a future of full inclusion for all people.

Thank you very much for your time.